

Hawaii MARINE

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April 30, 2004

Hawaii welcomes CMC



Lance Cpl. Megan L. Stiner

General Michael W. Hagee, 33rd Commandant of the Marine Corps, takes a moment to greet retired Lt. Col. Tom Kalus, a member of the Aloha Chapter of the Chosin Few, who attended the Commandant's speech Monday at Kaneohe Bay.

Base residents and visitors bid aloha to General and Mrs. Hagee

Lance Cpl. Megan L. Stiner
Combat Correspondent

General Michael W. Hagee, the 33rd Commandant of the Marine Corps, addressed hundreds of Marines, Sailors and family members who packed the base theater at MCB Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay, Monday afternoon.

During the brief stopover at Kaneohe Bay, he first awarded the Bronze Star Medal to Master Sgt. Gregory A. Carroll, staff noncommissioned officer in charge of Explosive Ordnance Disposal at Combat Service Support Group 3 for his distinguished duty serving as the EOD chief with Marine Expeditionary Unit

Service Support Group 15, 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable), I Marine Expeditionary Force, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. He then swore in 12 Marines during a reenlistment ceremony.

The Commandant talked to the audience about the War on Terrorism and today's Marine Corps, emphasizing that "there is truly no better time than today to be a Marine." Throughout his speech, he touched on many subjects including family issues, noting that, over the years, the number of married service members has dramatically increased, creating a

See *CMC*, A-2

CG invites input

Marines, Sailors, civilians and family members,

I am interested in your ideas and solicit your input for improving our base. You are the ones who live and work aboard Marine Corps Base Hawaii, and you are the ones who know first-hand what we need to improve upon.

I ask you to respond to one of these three questions:

- What are we doing that we shouldn't be doing?
- What are we not doing that we should be doing?
- What are we doing that we should be doing better?

Your responses should include a recommendation that will solve the problem.

E-mail your suggestions to me at CGMAIL@mcbh.usmc.mil.

If you don't have an e-mail account, you can fax your suggestions to 257-3290, or you can mail them to:

Commanding General
(Attn: CG Mail)
MCB Hawaii
Box 63002
MCB Kaneohe Bay, HI
96863-3002

Your suggestions can also be dropped off in person on base at the Adjutant's office in Building 216, Room 1.

My CG Mail is not designed to bypass the chain of command.

Your input is encouraged; however, no action can be taken if your response does not pertain to one of the questions listed above.

All responses must include your name and return address, so I can respond to you directly.

Semper Fidelis,

Paddling Lava Dogs



Lance Cpl. Michelle M. Dickson

MARINE CORPS TRAINING AREA BELLOWES — Lava Dogs from Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, prepare for their deployment with the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit by participating in amphibious assault vehicle training here, April 22. Get the full story on page A-3.

Charlie Company raids the darkness

Lance Cpl. Megan L. Stiner
Combat Correspondent

KAHUKU TRAINING AREA — For some people, the simple state of darkness can make them nervous, even frightened. For others, fear is not an option. For them, darkness creates an image and provides an atmosphere that enables these artists the opportunity to develop a masterpiece — or die trying.

Equipped with night vision goggles, weapons and their basic knowledge in the art of combat, Marines from Charlie Co., 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, added their own color to the canvas as they conducted a week of special operations training involving night helicopter raids.

Thirty-four Marines from 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, integrated into Charlie Co., 1/3, in preparation for deployment to Okinawa, Japan, where they will be part of the ground combat ele-

ment for the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit, explained 2nd Lt. Travis J. Fuller, 3rd Platoon commander, Charlie Co., 1/3.

Corporal Nick A. Misiano, the 2nd Platoon squad leader, came to 1/3 from 3/3 one-and-a-half months ago and found that training with members of a new unit can be quite difficult.

"There are conflicting viewpoints among the Marines from both companies," Misiano explained. He added that, that has been the most difficult aspect in recent training maneuvers, though the viewpoints have become less controversial over time.

For one week, the Marines participated in exercises at the Kahuku Training Area and Marine Corps Training Area Bellows. Throughout the week's evolution, they conducted a daytime helicopter raid and three night helicopter raids.

"Although each day was repetitive, it enabled us to better assess which areas we

needed more work on, and focus on those problems the following day and night," said Cpl. Steven Komin, machinegunner, Weapons Platoon squad leader.

The instruction Charlie Co. received during the week is part of the MEU Predeployment Training Program, which brought instructors from Special Operations Training Group, III Marine Expeditionary Force based in Okinawa, Japan, to train and critique Marines during the evolution.

"We recently received new infantry Marines into the company, which can make for a shaky week of training," said Komin. "For those Marines, this was their first time doing raids, so it was convenient to have the SOTG instructors there to help out."

After a day of field maneuvers, the Marines of Charlie Co. were anticipating

See *RAID*, A-6

MCBH News Briefs

H-3 Closes Two Days

The Honolulu-bound lanes of the H-3 freeway will be closed to vehicular traffic from 7 p.m. Saturday to 7 a.m. Sunday, for routine tunnel maintenance.

For more details, call Scott Naleimaile at the State Department of Transportation at 831-6712.

Iraq Units Seek Support

One of the surgical companies at Camp Fallujah, Iraq, that supports wounded Marines and Sailors is seeking donations of green PT (physical training) shorts in the sizes of medium through extra large; white, gray, green or black socks to be worn with boots (socks in size medium or large); and green T-shirts in sizes medium through extra large.

The company will replace the battered and torn clothing ripped from injured U.S. service members when they receive immediate care.

Send donations to the following address:

I MEF PAO
UIC 42540
FPO AP 96426-2540

State Alert to Sound Monday

The State Civil Defense monthly test of sirens and the Emergency Alert System will be held Monday at 11:45 a.m. The siren test is a steady 45-second tone, used to alert the public of any emergency that poses or may pose a threat to life and property. The siren signal alerts the public to turn on any radio or television for emergency information and instructions broadcast by civil defense agencies.

Tests of the State Civil Defense are conducted simultaneously in cooperation with Hawaii's broadcast industry each month. Disaster preparedness information is located in the front section of the white pages of telephone directories in all counties.

IMPORTANT NUMBERS

On-Base Emergencies	257-9111
Military Police	257-7114
Child Protective Service	832-5300
Fraud, Waste, Abuse & EEO	257-8852
Business Management Hotline	257-3188

Hawaii MARINE

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Americans urged to pray for the Nation, Thursday

MCB Hawaii Press Release

Thursday, U.S. Marine Corps Forces Pacific and Marine Corps Base Hawaii installations will celebrate the 53rd Annual National Day of Prayer.

The first Continental Congress called for a National Day of Prayer in 1775, and Abraham Lincoln called for another such day in 1863. Finally, by 1952 Congress established the National Day of Prayer as an annual event by a joint resolution, signed into law by President Harry S. Truman.

In 1988, the law was amended and signed by President Ronald Reagan, designating the observance to take place on the first Thursday of every May.

At Kaneohe Bay

- From 8 a.m. until 4 p.m., oral

prayers will be voiced each hour at the Pacific War Memorial (located by the H-3 main gate), and on each half hour at the base chapel (Bldg. 1090) by local chaplains. At both locations, prayer guides and information will be provided to participants about the National Day of Prayer.

The community is encouraged to take the time to stop by either location or join in with individual or collective prayers, at any time throughout the day, wherever they are.

- At 4 p.m., the base chapel will continue its observance of Holocaust Memorial Week.
- From 4:30 to 5:30 p.m., the base chapel will host a formal program at the Pacific War Memorial. The program is your special invitation to come together in support of the United States and enjoy musical tributes provided by the Marine Forces

Pacific Band.

- For complete information regarding the National Day of Prayer, surf www.NationalDayofPrayer.org/aboutndp.

Contact the K-Bay base chapel at 257-3552, for more information about observances.

At Camp H. M. Smith

- At 11 a.m., the community is invited to "Let Freedom Ring" at a nondenominational prayer service in observance of the National Day of Prayer at the Camp Smith Chapel. Participants are encouraged to reflect upon "the freedom to gather, the freedom to worship, the freedom to pray."
- For more information about the Camp Smith observance, call 477-8532.

(Editor's Note: Chaplain [Lt.] Winnie J. Walmsley contributed to this release.)

DoD works to speed up mail

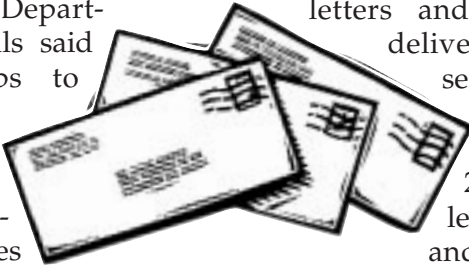
Sgt. 1st Class Doug Sample American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON — Acknowledging that problems persist in the military mail system, Department of Defense officials said they are taking steps to improve the process.

A report this month by the General Accounting Office, which oversees government agencies and spending, said longstanding problems with military mail delivery need to be resolved.

DoD is aware of the problem and is working to remedy it, said Charles S. Abell, principal deputy undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness, in an interview with the American Forces Radio and Television Service.

"Mail is very important to our service members and their families, and thus it's very important to the Department of Defense and the lead-



ership," Abell said. "Every time we identify a glitch in the process, we move immediately to fix it."

According to the GAO report, more than 65 million pounds of letters and parcels were delivered to troops serving in Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003, and problems with prompt and reliable mail delivery surfaced early on.

Congress and the White House forwarded more than 300 inquiries about mail delivery problems to military postal officials, the report said.

The GAO reported that soldiers and Marines in Operation Iraqi Freedom were unhappy with mail service; almost 60 percent of 127 service members surveyed said they were "dissatisfied" with the timeliness of mail delivery.

Although a test of transit time for mail delivery by military postal offi-

cials showed that so-called "data test letters" arrived in theater within the wartime standard of 11 to 14 days, service members said their personal mail actually took much longer to reach them.

More than half of the surveyed soldiers from Fort Stewart, Ga., and Marines from Camp Pendleton, Calif., said they waited four weeks or longer to get mail. Others commented that mail took as long as four months to work its way through the system, the report said.

Another 80 percent said they were aware of mail that was sent to them, but it was not received while they were deployed. The nonreceipt of mail became a concern for friends and family back home, the report stated.

He said slow delivery could be attributed to the sheer distance the mail has to travel to reach the theater and the remote locations of some

See *MAIL*, A-6

Base construction to get underway

Sgt. Joseph A. Lee Combat Correspondent

Two contracts totaling approximately \$1.8 million have been awarded, and construction is scheduled to begin soon on two base roadway projects that will close down certain areas on base in the near future.

The first project, a \$1.7 million widening of 3rd Street, is tentatively scheduled to begin May 10, and was awarded to Road Builders of Honolulu.

"The road is being widened to allow for the easier flow of traffic, including large tankers, that currently have a difficult time negotiating the slim roadways near the 'Fuel Farm,'" said Philip Lum, project engineer for the Facilities Department.

The first phase of this project will

require the closing of 3rd Street from C Street to D Street, and will also block a portion of D Street, forcing traffic to detour. This phase of construction is scheduled to take approximately 30 days to complete, and will pause to allow the completion of Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) exercises during June and July, according to Lum.

After the conclusion of RIMPAC, construction will continue in two additional, more extensive phases that will close the remaining portions of 3rd Street, from C Street to B Street, and beyond.

"The construction shouldn't concern most base tenants, as the street is fairly remote, but there will be detour signs located conveniently to guide traffic," said Lum.

Thurston-Pacific Inc., of Honolulu, will be starting its \$139,000 base road-reconditioning

project May 18. This project will involve the repaving of Harris Avenue from Mokapu Road to Seldon Street, as well as the replacement of two driveways in front of Firestone (at the base gas station).

Though the Harris Avenue project will keep one half of the road open at all times, and will not cause detours or delays, the replacement of the driveways will require their temporary closure.

"There are many entrances and exits to the Firestone, gas station area, and there will be signs indicating any detours a driver will be required to take," said Dennis Chiu, maintenance control director for Facilities.

Base residents, workers or patrons having questions or concerns regarding roadwork and detours should call the Provost Marshal's Office at 257-0183.

CMC, From A-1

remarkable amount of support from the military community at home.

"We are always doing one of two things," Hagee said, "either deploying to Iraq or supporting those who are [already deployed]."

Wives of deployed service members were gathered in the audience, as well as Korean War veterans who are members of the Aloha Chapter of the Chosin Few. The veterans gave verbal approval of many of Hagee's comments.

After his address, the Commandant invited his wife, Silke Hagee, to the stage to say a few words. She

talked primarily of the growing support the military enjoys from the civilian community. She also shared her education concerns about military children throughout the Corps.

"Here in Hawaii, it [education] is a very important issue," Silke Hagee said. "I will tell them [the Military Child Education Coalition in Washington, D.C.] what I've heard here in Hawaii about the school system. Hopefully, they will be able to help."

The Commandant of the Marine Corps received questions from the audience before providing many photo opportunities. Service members discussed their concerns about

combat medals and awards, and military and civilian job fields in the Corps. They also asked questions about which units would see future combat action.

Before departing, the CMC met with wives of service members who are deployed to Iraq and around the world. He also extended many accolades to various units for mission accomplishment.

"The sun never sets on the United States Marine Corps," he reminded the audience before leaving.

(Editor's Note: Photos of the CMC's visit can be viewed at mcbh.usmc.mil by clicking on the "Photos from CMC Visit" link.)

Double duty



Marines from Combat Assault Company anxiously wait on dry land to begin moving their amphibious assault vehicles into Bellows waters for training.

Amphibious assault vehicles get the job done both on land and out at sea

Lance Cpl. Michelle M. Dickson
Combat Correspondent

MARINE CORPS TRAINING AREA BELLOWS — Amphibious assault vehicles manned by Lava Dogs from Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, splashed into the waters here, April 22, as part of a training package in preparation for their deployment with the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit.

During the exercise, the Marines in the AAVs simulated an exit from the well deck of a ship. They demonstrated they could exit the vessel in a timely manner, no matter that the AAVs were charging through rough waters. Still, the Alpha Co. Marines kept their weapons inverted and helmets atop their bobbing heads, no matter what came their way. The troop commander, the senior Marine who was in charge of the deployment, maintained control of the entire unit.

With AAVs holding just the number of Marines to execute specific missions, the Lava Dogs prepared for an amphibious landing on nearby beaches.

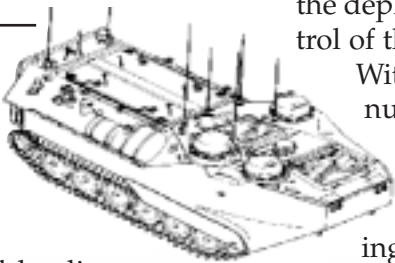
“Being in the AAVs can get someone very claustrophobic because there are no windows inside,” said Sgt. Victor

O’Neal, AAV section leader for Combat Assault Company. “The diesel fuel can get someone nauseous, and the Marines need to be able to handle those situations to react and perform the way they need to when arriving on the beach.”

Once out in the water a good distance, the AAVs turned around and came onto shore. This entry gave the Lava Dogs the opportunity to experience firsthand what they might encounter during real-world missions with the 31st MEU. Marines also asked plenty of questions, so they would have fewer when the time comes to execute.

“For a lot of us, it’s the first time being able to experience something like this,” said Lance Cpl. Daniel Smith Fichter, a machinegun team leader for Weapons Platoon, Alpha Company. “So many of the Marines here are new to the fleet, but everyone seems to be catching on really fast.”

“The most difficult part of this particular training would be leaving the track and keeping up security tactics,” said O’Neil. “We are reviewing a lot of information with the Marines, though, so they should be able to handle it very well. They work together as a group, and that’s what they need to do in order to be successful with an exercise like this.”



Assault Amphibian Vehicle Command Model 7A1

Description: The AAVC7A1 is an assault amphibious full-tracked landing vehicle. The vehicle gives a mobile task force communication center in water operations from ship to shore and to inland objectives once ashore.

Communication Center: The system consists of five radio operator stations, three staff stations and two master stations. The command communication system contains equipment to provide external secure radio transmission between each AAVC7A1 vehicle, and other vehicles and radios. Internal communication between each crew station is also provided.

Manufacturer: FMC Corporation

Date of first prototype: 1979

Date of first production vehicle: 1983

Engine Make: Cummins

Engine Model: VT400

Engine Type: 4 cycle, 8 cylinder, 90’ vee, water cooled

Fuel: Multifuel

Weight unloaded: 46,314 pounds

Weight combat equipped: 50,758 pounds

Fuel capacity: 171 gallons

Cruising range:

Land at 25 mph for 300 miles

Water at 2,600 rpm for 7 hours

Cruising speed:

Land at 20 to 30 mph

Water at 6 mph

Maximum speed forward:

Land at 45 mph

Water at 8.2 mph

Cargo compartment:

Length: 13.5 feet

Width: 6.0 feet

Height: 5.5 feet

Capacity: 21 combat-equipped troops

Armament and ammunition: 7.62 machinegun

Unit replacement cost: \$2.2 – 2.5 million

An amphibious assault vehicle hits the waves after leaving the beach during the exercise.

Lance Cpl. Michelle M. Dickson

Word on the Street

Where in Asia or the Pacific would you like to return to?



“I would like to go back to Okinawa. It was my first overseas deployment.”

Walter Killough
Retired major
U.S. Marine Corps



“I would like to go back to Guam or Truk islands. It’s some of the best scuba diving in the world.”

Petty Officer 1st Class John McGaha
Corpsman
MAG-24



“I like it here. I like the climate and all the activities, sports and the beaches.”

Senior Chief Petty Officer William Stone
Regimental senior chief
Headquarters Co.,
3rd Marine Regiment



“I’d like to go back to Hong Kong. That place is out of control and lots of fun.”

Staff Sgt. Joshua Wruble
Assistant operations
chief, 3/3



“Korea, I like the field operations, I learned a lot.”

Lance Cpl. Justin Post
Field radio operator
Alpha Co., 1/12

Lava Dogs blast through close quarters battle training

Lance Cpl. Megan L. Stiner
Combat Correspondent

The Deep Reconnaissance Platoon confidently creeps into the enemy establishment, knowing that once inside it is basically on its own. Only a group of Marines formed to provide security and to block any avenue of approach guard the perimeter of the area. Luckily for the Marines inside the building, the outside



Lance Cpl. Megan L. Stiner

Fifty Lava Dogs were selected to participate in a special two-week close quarters battle training course.

security platoon is more than prepared to handle this particular job.

Fifty Marines from Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, were hand selected by the battalion to participate in a two-week training course that could land them a position in the Maritime Special Purpose Force security platoon, or even as a trailer for the DRP’s upcoming deployment with the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit.

According to Gunnery Sgt. Irvin N. Howard, a close quarters battle (CQB) instructor (with III Marine Expeditionary Force, Okinawa, Japan), battalions look for seasoned or semi-senior platoons containing Marines with initiative who are able to quickly grasp unique tactical skills when choosing Marines needed for the type of combat the 31st MEU could encounter.

Special Operations Training Group Marines from Okinawa, Japan, have been instructing 1/3 Marines in preparation for the MEU assignment. The SOTG instructors train and critique the Lava Dogs in everything from their weapons retention to their close combat tactics. The close quarters battle training is designed to prepare the infantry Marines for



Lance Cpl. Megan L. Stiner

Rounds fly through the air as a Marine executes close combat training procedures taught during a program of special operations training received in preparation for an upcoming deployment with the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit.

close combat operations in a wartime environment.

According to Sgt. Michael V. Perella, another CQB instructor, SOTG, III MEF, the first week of close quarter battle training involves applying learned techniques. The SOTG instructors throw new techniques at the infantry Marines at an incredibly fast pace.

Ever since April 19, the Bravo Company Marines have been honing CQB techniques, shooting 136,000 rounds in one particular week, according to Howard. They ran through close combat drills each day from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., he explained, then engaged targets between 40 and 50 times in one day. They split into two relays of 25 Marines each, and rotated between firing and staying hydrated under a tent set up for them at the Range Training Facility aboard Kaneohe Bay.

They focused on shooting on the move and on engaging multiple targets — areas that they may not receive a lot of training with on a regular basis, said Perella.

“Out of every 50 Marines, between five and eight will not qualify in the methods learned that week,” Perella explained regarding the level of difficulty at CQB training.

Marines who do qualify move on to an indoor training environment, and they eventually qualify for a position as a trailer in the DRP.

“The Marines will break down into two- and three-man teams, and [they will] maneuver through rooms, identifying enemy targets from non-enemy combatant targets, reacting according to the situation,” said Perella.

See LAVA DOGS, A-5

Skinny Dragons give thousands for relief

Lt. j.g. Shawn Spooner
Patrol Squadron 4

Surpassing last year’s total of \$3,800, the Skinny Dragons of Patrol Squadron 4 have made a generous contribution by donating more than \$6,000 for the 2004 Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society fund drive.

“Our goal was to get 100 per-cent contact in the command, not necessarily [a] 100-per-cent donation,” said Cmdr. “Rocky” Racoosin, the VP-4 commanding officer. “It’s a great comfort for our Sailors knowing that they can go to the Relief Society and receive financial assistance when they are experiencing unex-pected circumstances.”

The society was founded in 1904 and is a private nonprofit organiza-tion, which is sponsored by the Department of the Navy. It operates 250 offices throughout the world.

Incorporated in the District of Columbia, the Navy Marine Corps Relief Society currently has its head-quarters in Arlington, Va., and its



board of directors consists of active duty and retired service members or spouses of the naval services.

“The mission of the Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society is to provide, in partnership with the Navy and Marine Corps, financial, educational and other assistance to members of the Naval Services of the United States, eligible family members, and survivors when in need, and to receive and manage funds to administer these programs,” according to the society.

NMCRS provides financial assistance in the form of inter-

est-free loans, grants and need-based scholarships. Additionally the society offers budget counseling services, food lockers, infant layettes (also called “junior seabags”), thrift shops and visiting nurse services.

Although the Navy sponsors NMCRS, the society receives no funding from the government. More than 3,000 trained volunteers and a small staff of employ-ees support the society. It relies solely on the annual fund drive conducted by the Navy and Marine Corps, and a direct mail campaign to retirees.

Both fund drives are conducted under the watchful eye of the Secretary of the

Navy, and all contributions are returned in the form of relief or educational assis-tance. Overhead expenses are reim-bursed via a reserve fund that was estab-lished during World War II. Further, all contributions are tax deductible.

“I’m very satisfied with the results and hope that anyone that needs assis-tance will use NMCRS,” said Lt. j.g. Tony Agcaoili, pilot, who spearheaded VP-4’s NMCRS 2004 campaign. “SKC [chief storekeeper] Jacques Nicdao, SK1 [storekeeper first class] Randy O’Neal and SK1 Sam Easley were instrumental in the attainment of the command’s goal of 100 percent contact,” Agcaoili added.

Are you eligible for aid at NMCRS?

The answer is “yes,” if you fall into one of the following categories:

- Active duty and retired Navy and Marine Corps personnel.
- Eligible family members of the per-sonnel listed above.
- Eligible family members of Navy

and Marine Corps personnel who died on active duty or in a retired status.

- Reservists on extended active duty.
- Indigent mothers (65 years or older) of deceased service members who have limited resources and no family to provide for their welfare.
- Ex-spouses who are "20-20-20" (that

is, un-remarried former spouses whose marriage to a service member lasted for at least 20 years while the service member was on active duty).

- Uniformed members of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and their eli-gible family members.

LAVA DOGS, From A-4

The one-to-six ratio of instructors to students at CQB training provides an effective and safe learning environment for Marines.

The techniques and methods used should be taught to all Marines, said Howard, who explained that CQB is only associated with special operations teams.

“This is definitely beneficial training for all Marines,” said Cpl. Timothy G. Burton, 2nd squad leader, Marine

Special Forces Security Platoon, regard-ing preparation for the real battlefield.

Although Burton has never served in combat, he’s been told that the CQB training is as close to real combat as he and his fellow Marines will experience.

“We run through the methods that we

are more unfamiliar with, and practice dry-firing to ensure we are prepared to qualify,” Burton said. “Slowly, but sure-ly, we are gaining confidence in these new methods. Once this training evolu-tion is complete, I feel we will be more than confident in our combatabilities.”



Lance Cpl. Megan L. Stiner

Lance Cpl. Elpidio Espinosa Jr., 3rd Platoon rifleman with Charlie Company, 1/3, simulates covering injured Marines during a night helicopter raid training exercise.

RAID, From A-1

their next move, attaching night vision goggles to their Kevlars and mentally preparing themselves. As the sun set, three CH-53D Sea Stallion helicopters from Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 363 picked up five sticks, or groups, of Marines from the Kahukus (in the combat scenario, Kahuku was a ship) and delivered them in two trips to Bellows. Once they all arrived, the action began. The shadowed silhouettes streamed

from each helicopter and headed towards their objective in a quick, yet continuously, stealth-like manner. The first group to enter the building was 1st Platoon, which served as the security platoon. Its objective was to secure the building for the second sweep of Marines. Second Platoon portrayed a support platoon. Once the area was secured, it entered the building and captured the objective. The final wave consisted of Marines from 3rd Platoon who served as the

assault platoon. Their task was to gather information and assist the injured from the building. The Navy corpsman that followed also helped extract the injured Marines. Once the objective was taken and everyone was accounted for, Marines and Sailors quickly returned to the helicopters carrying the injured. The Sea Stallions returned to Kahuku. According to Cpl. Steven M. Christiansen, 1st Platoon team leader, the most important concept they grasped during the exercises was the need to be “quick in and quick out.” As the week progressed, he said that Charlie Company became a lot more efficient at its goal. “The training that Charlie Company received in the past month has prepared them for the future coming together of the entire battalion for the MEU,” Fuller added. “The next time Charlie Company performs training at Kahuku, it will be for an entire battalion field exercise. That exercise will be their final major training event in Hawaii.” “The more effective we [Charlie Company] become as a unit, the easier it will be to combine with the other companies for future training and deployment,” said Christiansen. “We are looking forward to the opportunity to deploy as a battalion, and are working hard to be as prepared as possible.”

MAIL, From A-2

units on the ground. Mail to Iraq is delivered either by tactical airlift, or along dangerous convoy supply routes. Abell said stability in Iraq would help to ease some mail delivery problems, because "units aren't moving around as much — we know where they are and the logistical links to them to provide the mail." DoD also increased the number and size of military postal units in Kuwait and Bahrain, Abell said, which has helped to reduce transit times. He noted that the mail will be especially important as election time approaches, with thousands of service members expected to request and mail in absentee ballots. To ensure that votes arrive on time, Abell said, deployed eligible voters should seek out their voting assistance officers to learn more about requirements to vote in their state, precinct, borough or locality. "They have the materials and can help the individual go through the process," he said. Abell also urged overseas voters to request a ballot no later than the second week of September. He said absentee voters should mail their ballot on or before Oct. 20 so that "no matter where you are in our service overseas, your ballot will get to the right place by the time it needs to be there to be counted." He also advised people sending mail to Iraq to use a current address, to print clearly and to include the proper postage.